

RECOGNIZING THE MARCH FOR LIFE

HON. JOHN BOOZMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the thousands of people in Arkansas and across the Nation who gathered this week to protest the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

Like those who assembled, I believe strongly in the sanctity of human life. 32 years ago, the Supreme Court decided that a woman could end a life by terminating her pregnancy for any reason, including health, gender selection or because it was an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. As a result, thousands of lives have been ended out of convenience mislabeled as a woman's right to choose.

Mr. Speaker, as we remember this powerful Supreme Court decision this week, I ask that we also remember that we have a responsibility to protect the precious lives of the unborn children to come.

H.R. 304—AIRCRAFT CARRIER END- STRENGTH ACT

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on H.R. 304, a bill I introduced in the name of national security. This bill would set in law a requirement that our United States Navy maintain a fleet of at least twelve aircraft carriers.

Why, my colleagues might ask, is this change in law necessary? I believe the reason is clear. Our Nation is enduring an extraordinary amount of pressures, both financially and militarily. Somehow, Mr. Speaker, those financial pressures have weighed so heavy on our military leaders that they feel forced to propose a reduction in the number of carriers available to our Commander in Chief.

Mr. Speaker, the military might of the United States is unmatched. It is unmatched, Mr. Speaker, because no other Nation faces the challenges we face. And that is why I have introduced this legislation. Our unique challenges require force strength, flexibility, and presence. This is not my lesson; this is the lesson of past military conflicts.

The consistent message from senior Department of Defense leadership is that many of the important tactical missions accomplished in Afghanistan and Iraq would not have been possible without our fleet of aircraft carriers.

Aircraft carriers are in constant demand all over the globe. There is no technology, no way they can be in two places at the same time.

The Navy's CNO himself believes even with the technological advances, quantity has a quality all its own.

So this legislation, H.R. 304, will ensure that our Nation's Commander in Chief has a full fleet of carriers in times of peace, and in times of crisis. My colleagues, I urge you to support H.R. 304, support our carrier fleet, and support keeping the fabric of our national security whole.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EARLY WARNING AND RAPID NOTIFICATION ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to be introducing the Early Warning and Rapid Notification Act, which will fix some of the communications problems that plagued the effort to effectively warn people about the tsunami of December 26, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, exactly one month ago over 160,000 people in the Indian Ocean region died as a result of a catastrophic tsunami caused by the largest earthquake the world has seen in over 40 years. In the wake of that disaster, an outpouring of sympathy across this country has resulted in over \$350 million in private donations, with the United States government pledging nearly that much as well. Having witnessed such devastation, we're now asking the question: How can we keep this from happening again?

There were two entirely avoidable problems that contributed to the scale of the December 26 tragedy. The first was a lack of tsunami sensors in the Indian Ocean, which made it difficult for the scientists at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii to determine if the massive earthquake had in fact spawned a killer wave. In response to this we've seen a number of proposals, both from this Congress and around the world, to establish a global tsunami sensor network. I support these proposals, since there is no reason why we should be caught unaware in the event of any disaster where we have the ability to detect it beforehand.

The second problem on December 26 was far more fundamental, and far more maddening. It was, in this era of cell phones and instant text messaging and worldwide satellite coverage, a complete breakdown of communications. In some cases, we had the ability to let people know, but couldn't. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center simply wasn't sure who to contact in those countries bordering the Indian Ocean that were in danger from the tsunami. They did an excellent job in reaching who they could, but there was too much confusion, and far too much time passed before they could get the warning to those who needed it. There's no reason for this. The United States should know exactly who to contact in every country in the world if we have information about a natural disaster that they need. In this legislation, the State Department is directed to conduct a study examining the lines of communication about natural disasters between the United States and other countries, and to make recommendations to strengthen those lines if they're found lacking.

But even if we had known exactly when, where, and how hard the tsunami was going to hit, and had been able to get that info to the governments of every nation in the region, not much would have changed. Because in order to save lives, you have to get that information to the people in danger. The people in the towns and villages along the coasts. The tourists on the beaches. Without a way to get warnings to these people, all the sensors in the world won't do a bit of good.

Mr. Speaker, in this country we're used to all types of warning systems. Warnings about

tornadoes, warnings about floods, warnings about hurricanes; warnings about chemical spills and potential terrorist attacks; we grew up with the Emergency Broadcast System to warn us about the unthinkable. In short, we have one of the most advanced systems in the entire world for warning people about all types of hazards. And these warning systems save lives. But many other countries are missing even the most rudimentary ways of getting warnings to people at risk, which results in tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths each year.

The United Nations recognizes the need for a comprehensive, worldwide effort to establish early warning systems in countries that don't have them, and last week launched the International Early Warning Programme. The Programme identifies four elements of effective early warning systems: knowing what the risks are, detecting disasters, disseminating warnings, and making sure people know how to respond.

The legislation I am introducing today directs the United States to work with the United Nations in implementing the International Early Warning Programme, and authorizes \$50 million to help establish early warning systems in other countries for all types of hazards. This isn't merely protection against another tsunami; it's protection against floods, fires, storms, volcanoes, and any other event where a timely warning can save lives. This bill also expands the scope of our existing research programs on early warning systems to include an international component, and directs additional research into the use of advanced technologies to provide quick and effective warnings, both at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, setting up a worldwide tsunami warning system is important, but the sad likelihood is that far more people will be killed from floods and storms in the future than from another tsunami. This legislation will help establish systems that provide effective early warnings around the world for all types of hazards, and will help protect lives and property from the next disaster that, I fear, will come all too soon.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES W. EVATT

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor James W. Evatt for his many years of service to the Boeing Company and our Nation's defense programs. Jim is stepping down from his role as vice president and general manager of Boeing's Missile Defense Systems and vice president and general manager for the Missile Defense National Team Systems Engineering and Integration program. He has held both positions since 2001.

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Jim joined the Boeing Company in 1987 after 22 years of Government service. During his tenure as vice president and general manager, he was responsible for Boeing's Ground-based Midcourse Defense program, the Airborne Laser, Advanced Tactical Laser program, Boeing's Air and Missile Defense program, and the Laser and Electro Optical Systems program. He was also responsible for all

Boeing missile defense programs including its work on PAC-3, SLAMRAAM, Avenger, and advanced systems initiatives. Furthermore, he was instrumental in creating the missile defense market area within the company and aligning it with the Missile Defense Agency to ensure a seamless working relationship on the programs critical to national security.

In addition to his Boeing responsibilities, Jim is a member of the Air Force Association's Science and Technology Committee and the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

Mr. Speaker, Jim has been an integral part of our national security for many years. His experience, dedication, and knowledge will be greatly missed. On behalf of everyone in north Alabama, I rise to thank him for his service and join his colleagues, family, and friends in congratulating him on a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO HILDA GAY LEGG

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the true diamonds working inside the rough and tumble granite rock of the Federal Government that will be leaving her post on January 31, 2005. The gem I'm referring to is Adair County, Kentucky, native and USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator, Hilda Gay Legg.

I had the privilege of working closely with Hilda prior to her appointment to RUS. She served as executive director and CEO of the Center for Rural Development in Somerset, Kentucky, from 1994 until October 2001. Hilda provided true leadership by turning an upstart conference site into a world class community-oriented interactive center. In that position, she helped develop and implement a broadband telecommunications program in rural communities throughout southern and eastern Kentucky. The Center grew to manage 40 Internet centers that offer high speed, interactive video conferencing and community access to computers. Thanks to the solid foundation built by Hilda, those activities continue today.

In 2001, President George W. Bush tapped Hilda as the 15th person, and first woman, to serve as the Administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration—Rural Utilities Service. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed the landmark 2002 Farm Bill which in turn launched a number of new RUS initiatives including a broadband loan and grant program, energy efficiency grants, weather radio grants, and local television guarantees. Hilda took these new responsibilities in stride, leading the agency with professionalism and accomplishing much of our agenda.

While Administrator, Hilda approved some 5,570 loans and grants totaling nearly \$20 billion. These funds will improve water quality in communities throughout America, provide access to top-level treatment in our rural health clinics, and give our schools Internet access to the world. Under her faithful and deliberate watch RUS programs increased by nearly 60 percent while loan delinquency was a mere .1 percent. Hilda's leadership also improved loan processing efficiency, set in motion an intense

review of risk management, and accomplished much toward President Bush's goals in the areas of efficient and effective management, broadband deployment, energy independence, and job creation in rural America.

Hilda has never ceased to serve as an advocate for rural America and she has done so with remarkable class, spunk, and spirit. As her legacy still remains at the Center for Rural Development, I am confident it will also remain at RUS and in communities throughout the nation that have been touched by her efforts.

Mr. Speaker, although the Federal Government is losing out with Hilda's retirement, I can selfishly say I am thrilled that this precious gem is coming home to Kentucky.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEROES ACT

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to join with 18 of my colleagues, including the entire congressional delegation of Alabama, in introducing legislation aimed at honoring the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform by greatly enhancing military combat death benefits. My legislation is also needed to ensure that military families are properly compensated in the event of the loss of a loved one in combat.

The nearly 170,000 American military personnel in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq are there to defend our nation's freedom and security. Their service is vital to the long term protection of our land and they must know that their government and fellow citizens are fully behind their efforts. I believe one of the best ways to demonstrate this support for our military is to provide them with the peace of mind that if they should lose their lives in combat their families will receive adequate death benefits.

The need to improve military combat death benefits is not new to Congress. In 2003 and 2004, enhancements were made to these benefits as part of the annual Defense Authorization bills. For example, the military combat death benefit was increased from \$6,000 to \$12,000 and Congress directed the Pentagon to study the feasibility of increasing Servicemen's Group Life Insurance maximum coverage to \$350,000 with the military covering the first \$100,000 of insurance for service members who purchase the maximum benefit. However, that's simply not generous enough.

I do not believe these benefits adequately compensate military families, nor do they send a strong enough message to our military personnel that their government will honor their sacrifice by providing proper benefits in the event of their death in combat.

My bill, known as the Honoring Every Requirement of Exemplary Service (HEROES) Act, would increase the military gratuity death benefit from the present \$12,000 to \$100,000. Furthermore, it would also increase the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance maximum coverage from the current \$250,000 to \$400,000 with the first \$150,000 in coverage guaranteed by the Department of Defense once a soldier is deployed into combat.

What's more, the HEROES Act would make retroactive payments of \$238,000 to the fami-

lies of those military personnel who've already lost their lives in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. This amount is equal to the \$88,000 increase in the death gratuity payment as well as the \$150,000 insurance coverage benefit boost. These enhanced benefits would apply to military personnel losing their lives in combat as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

In closing, I would urge quick adoption of this measure in order to give our military personnel and their families greater comfort as they are called upon to defend America.

THE NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION—PROVIDING PRAISEWORTHY SERVICE TO THOSE IN NEED

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the National Funeral Directors Association for their relief efforts in light of the recent tsunami tragedy in South Asia. Following President Bush's plea for monetary donations to assist the humanitarian effort, they established the Funeral Service Asian Relief Fund, which directs the funds to one or more charitable organizations assisting in the relief effort.

The National Funeral Directors Association has long been involved in volunteering their time and resources to aid in domestic disasters, such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack and the Oklahoma City bombing. However, it is clear that their care and concern for humanity goes beyond our American borders as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the efforts of the National Funeral Directors Association, including a member in my East-Central Indiana district, to aid the international relief efforts assisting the victims of the South Asia tragedy. I sincerely hope that Americans, and men and women throughout the world, will look to this as an example of care and compassion for mankind.

TRIBUTE TO MR. PETER VAN DER VELDE

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, Mr. ROTHMAN and I would like to call to your attention the work of an outstanding public servant, Mr. Peter Van Der Velde, Captain with the Hawthorne Police Department, who was recognized on Friday, January 21, 2005 for his lifelong dedication to public safety. It is only fitting that he be honored in this, the permanent record of the greatest freely elected body on earth, for he has a long history of leadership, creativity, and commitment to his noble profession.

Mr. Peter Van Der Velde was born on August 23, 1947 in Paterson, New Jersey. He eventually moved from Paterson to the nearby Borough of Ramsey, New Jersey where he finished his formal education. After he graduated, Peter decided to serve in the United